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ninth the latest which are probable. This opinion, however, seems in great measure to rest on two assumptions, which every one will not, I think, be disposed to accept without proof:—1st. That the Casket was made for a member of the highest and *most educated* class; and, 2ndly. That at any period later than the ninth century Roman letters, and not runes, would have been employed on any object made for such a personage.

“I can see nothing to prove that the Casket was not made for a layman; this to me seems quite possible, though it is perhaps more *probable* that it was made for an ecclesiastic. It is, however, obviously very unsafe to treat mere probabilities as if proved, and then to argue from them. It seems to me that, as the dates of MSS. can generally be well ascertained, inferences drawn from them afford us safer ground to go upon.

“As to the material of the Casket, I must observe that Mr. Stephens must have read what I wrote very carelessly, if he supposes me to have said, or suggested, that the narwhal is not a cetaceous animal, which I suppose is what is meant by the facetious observation that that animal ‘is or used to be,’ such. Nor did I say that he said that it is ‘either of ivory, or of the tusk of the narwhal.’ My object was merely to draw the distinction between bone and ivory, and to affirm that it was the former, and not the latter. It is, as I have said, bone of a somewhat coarse and open structure, whereas the tusk of the narwhal has the exterior of remarkably fine and hard ivory, while the interior is of a rough irregular texture, partially transparent, and which cannot be readily carved. Almost any ancient carving in this last material will show both portions; for it is difficult to procure a piece of the ivory alone of large size. It would, I think, be difficult to procure a plate 3 in. by  $4\frac{1}{2}$  (the dimensions of the larger plates of this box), which should not be in part composed of the rough interior substance.

“As the only other two instances of carvings of a like character which I have met with are executed in bone of a like kind to that of which this box is made, the precise nature of the material appears to be a matter worth noticing.”

The following papers were submitted to the Members:—

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#### REMARKS ON A CARVED ROCK AT RYEFIELD, COUNTY OF CAVAN.

BY GEO. V. DU NOYER, ESQ., M.R.I.A., GEOLOGIST, GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF IRELAND.

THE startling discoveries of worked flint hatchets and arrowheads at a depth of twenty feet, or so, in the undisturbed alluvial gravel on either side of the Valley of the Somme, near Abbeville, made by Mons. Boucher de Perthes, and published by him in the year 1849, took the whole geological and antiquarian world by surprise.

Subsequent explorations made by Mr. Prestwich and other English geologists at the same locality, as well as in the drift gravels of the South of England confirmed the truth of the original discovery, and thus an unexpected light was thrown on the history of the antiquity of the human race in Western Europe. Equally wonderful was the discovery of implements of stone and flint mixed with the bones of such extinct animals as the lion, tiger, bear, hyena, rhinoceros, elephant, hippopotamus, mammoth, reindeer, &c., in the earthen or stalagmitic floor of Kent's Cave, in Devonshire, and in other limestone caverns in the South of England, and more recently in the caverns of Chaffaud, in Poitou, and others in the West of France.

Such facts having been established on incontrovertible evidence, the next inquiry is, at what period of European cosmogony were these relics deposited as they are found, and what was the climatal condition, and what the distribution of land and water over our latitudes, at that period. The first question cannot be satisfactorily answered; but the others are capable of some explanation.

If the bones of extinct Mammalia have been found at the localities stated, as well as in Ireland, it is clear that when these animals lived they must have passed from one of these districts to the other on dry land. The distribution, therefore, of land and water over North-western Europe must have been very different then from what it is now, inasmuch as the English Channel and Irish Sea did not then exist. If, however, we find the handiwork of man associated with the remains of these extinct Mammalia, it follows as a simple induction that he existed contemporaneously with them, and most probably migrated, as they did, over that land which then formed a portion of the European Continent, but which has since been destroyed by the sea. It may be argued that these extinct animals inhabited what is now England and Ireland long before the first human settlers landed on their shores; the animals certainly roamed to our latitudes from what is now the Continent of Europe, on dry land; and it is possible that at a subsequent epoch, when the sea had formed our islands, man located himself upon them, and exterminated these animals. One supposition is just as startling as the other; the only difference between them being merely a portion of a period of time so vastly remote, that no idea can be formed as to its absolute antiquity.

The existence, therefore, of the human race dates back to an indefinite period of time; yet the mind of the Biblical student may be calmed by the reflection that the Sacred Book is accurate, when asserting that "in the beginning" God made man, and gave him dominion over every created thing. Man, from the first, as an intelligent being, fabricated weapons adapted as well for the chase as domestic uses; he pursued "the beasts of the field," and slew them

either for food or necessaries, and thus asserted the power given him over all animated nature in virtue of his being endowed with a "living soul":—

"Os homini sublime dedit cœlumque tueri  
Jussit ac sidera attolere vultus."

Mr. Poulett Scrope, in his work on the extinct volcanoes of Central France, records the following remarkable fact:—

"The cone in the immediate vicinity of the town of Le Puy is that of the Montagne de Denise; the summit and flanks of this oblong hill are covered with large accumulations of very fresh looking scoriæ, lapillo, and puzzolana, out of which several prominent masses of columnar basalt are projected into the valleys beneath.

"The sides and base of one of these masses are enveloped by a stratified breccia, or tuff, of no great coherence, in which large quantities of bones are found of the elephant, rhinoceros, *Cervus elephas*, &c., and other extinct Mammalia; and in one locality the remains of at least two human skeletons; a block of this breccia containing the greater portion of a human skull, and several bones, is preserved in the museum of Le Puy. This discovery was made in the year 1844, and its truth confirmed by the 'Congrès Scientifique,' 1856, vol. i., p. 283."—Scrope's "Volcanoes," chap. viii., p. 182.

According to recent geological researches, man's existence on the earth goes back to the Miocene age in central India,<sup>1</sup> and the Pliocene period in Europe,<sup>2</sup> and it would appear that at these early periods he displayed an aptitude for construction, as well as for decorative or descriptive carving, and practised these arts ere he had taken his earliest lesson in architecture, and long before he had acquired the use of letters.<sup>3</sup>

Some of the most remarkable examples of the handiwork of these Tertiary men have lately been brought to light by the explorations

<sup>1</sup> See "Essay on the Antiquity of Man, as determined by the Occurrence of Stone Implements in Lateritic Formations in Various Parts of Madras and Narcot," by R. Brien Foot, of the Geological Survey of India; and notice of the discovery of the Gigantic Tortoise in the Sewalik Hills proved to be of Miocene age, by the late Dr. Falkner, and Captain, now Sir Proby Cautley, in the year 1836. This reptile, the shell of which measured 12 feet long, by 8 feet in diameter, and 6 feet high, is mentioned in the Indian Mythology, and pourtrayed as supporting the elephant with the world on his back; and was coexistent with the original inhabitants, as stated in their legends.—

"Quarterly Journal of Science," No. ix., January, 1866.

<sup>2</sup> See remarks on the discovery of markings on the bones of *Elephas meridionalis*, an animal of Pliocene age in Europe, supposed by Mons. Desnoyers and other naturalists to be of human production; also the discovery of a remarkable tooth, most probably the premolar of a man, found associated with the remains of *Diprotodon*, in an Australian cave, by Mr. Gerard Kreft.—"Quarterly Journal of Science," No. ix. Jan. 1866.

<sup>3</sup> The Darwinian theory of man having been a development of an anthropoid ape receives a direct refutation in the relics of the Miocene human race.

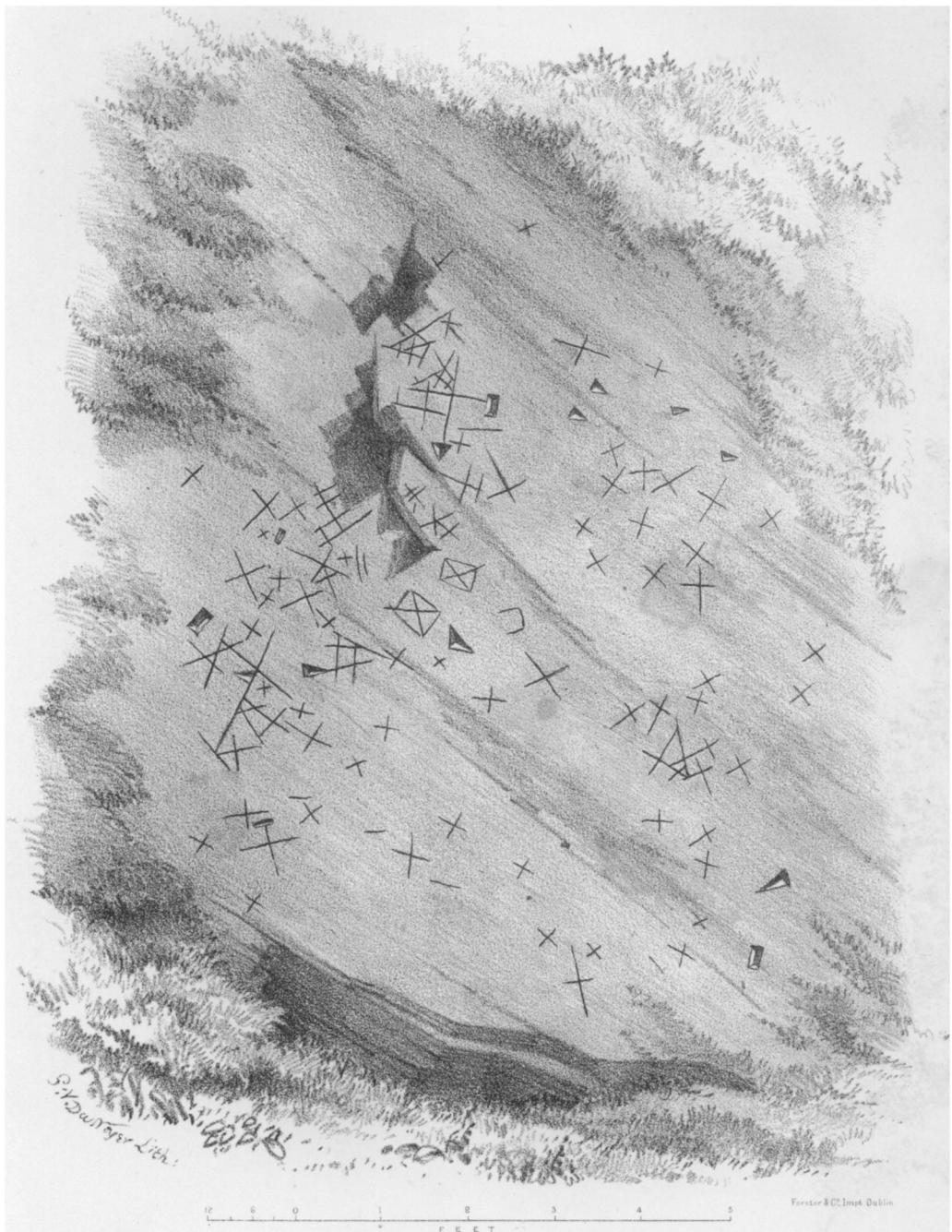
of M. Bruillet and M. Meillet, in the caves of Chaffaud, in Poitou, and published by them in their work, "Epoques Antédeluvienne et Celtique du Poitou."

These explorers state that the carved bones were found in connexion with the remains of the bear, hyena, auroch, and other extinct Mammalia in the undisturbed stalagmite of the cave floor. These carvings represent spearheads, zigzag, or chevron ornaments, rings, *crosses* and *dots*; and in two instances the human face, seen in front and in profile, the former being produced by three groups of short lines, with a herringbone pattern beneath the chin; the latter being more artistic, and showing one arm extended in front of the figure, while overhead a spear appears in the act of descending, as if to strike the back of the head. In two instances we have the representation of a so-called serpent, with a row of filaments over the head, the body of one of the animals being decorated with a zigzag ornament. I cannot but think that these represent eel-like fish, the filaments being the pectoral fins.

Some of the carvings have what we would call an Oghamic look; and it is possible that these strokes, rings, and angular figures, are in reality the first effort at the construction of letters. Some of the bones are decorated with outlined figures of animals, such as the horse, and of birds: of the former, the most remarkable is that of an animal with a long trunk, like an elephant, but without tusks; a still longer tail; a mane like that of a horse, and very short legs. Can this represent the *Mammoth*? Mons. Lartet has described an ancient tomb, near Aurignac, in the South of France, before which funeral feasts had been held; and among the ashes were found flint implements, together with the burnt bones belonging to most of the extinct animals, including the *Mammoth*, in such a state as to show they had been cooked by man (Lyell's "Antiquity of Man"). It is quite possible that this representation is that of the *Mammoth*, and the impression conveyed by the contour of the figure is one of great helplessness.

From one of these Chaffaud caves some bones were procured, engraved with a series of devices pronounced by Mons. Pictet, of Geneva, to bear a striking resemblance to some of the letters of the Sanscrit alphabet in its oldest form, and which, according to the same high authority, was in use 400 or 500 years before the Christian era, Mons. Pictet with much reason doubts that this particular sculpturing was found directly associated with the bones of *extinct Mammalia*; but it is probable that it lay in a layer *above* the more ancient fragments, and got mixed with them when the authors were compiling their most admirable memoir.

As yet no very important discovery of cave remains has been made in Ireland, if we except the occurrence of the bones of *Elephas primigenius*, *Ursus spelæus*, *U. arctos*, *Cervus tarandus*, and a



CARVINGS ON NATURAL ROCK, BALLYDERRAGH, CO. CAVAN.

species of *Equus* of a size intermediate between the common horse and the zebra, in a limestone fissure which was broken into during some quarry operations near Dungarvan, in the year 1859."—(See Jukes' "Manual of Geology.")

If, however, not many of these drift or Pleistocene fragments have been brought to light in Ireland, we possess a collection of prehistoric megalithic remains, which in point of singularity of construction, numbers, and the quaint carvings with which many of them are decorated, far surpass anything of the kind as yet discovered either in England or the Continent, and are only approached in point of interest by the sculptured stones of Scotland,<sup>1</sup> and some of the great stone chambers or "dolmens" of the district of the Morbihan, in France, or those of Guernsey, and of Denmark.

The late discoveries by Mr. Eugene Conwell, of Trim, in the cairns on the peaks of the hills over Loughcrew, in the county of Meath, have, however, brought to light a series of megalithic structures so lavishly adorned with almost all the types of primeval as well as prehistoric sculpturings and devices, that this one locality alone is more rich in such remains than those existing in an entire province in France or Denmark.<sup>2</sup>

In the summer of the year 1864, while geologising over the district east of Oldcastle, in the county of Meath, I was fortunate enough to light on an example of carvings on a natural rock surface, which is unique in the East of Ireland, so far as our present information goes. These occur on the glacialized surface of an inclined bed of lower Silurian grit,<sup>3</sup> near the summit of Ryefield Hill, in the townland of Ballydorragh, county of Cavan, one mile and a half to the north of the Virginia Road station on the Meath Railway.

The accompanying lithograph is copied from my original sketch of these markings, drawn to the scale of half an inch to the foot. The markings are all produced by simple scraping with a saw-like motion; and some of them, if not all, must have been formed by a metal implement. The figures most commonly represented are detached straight-armed crosses; but not unfrequently these are so grouped or clustered together as to form a network of lines crossing in every direction; in two instances these crosses are inclosed in four lines, or rather an oblong rectangular figure is crossed from angle to angle; sometimes a single line is crossed by two smaller

<sup>1</sup> See Publications of the Spalding Club, and those illustrating the rock sculpturings of Northumberland and the eastern Borders, by the Duke of Northumberland.

<sup>2</sup> The hafted stone hatchet sculptured in the dolmen called "Le Table des Marchands" in Brittany, and described in the "Proceedings of the Royal Irish

Academy," by Samuel Ferguson, Esq., Q. C., has not as yet been discovered amongst the devices in any of the prehistoric megalithic chambered or other structures in Ireland.

<sup>3</sup> The rock dips at 35° to the N.; the glacial striae on it bearing 40° W. of N., and E. of South; and consequently up the inclined plane.

lines near each other, and again one arm of the cross is terminated by a short blunt line, or an arrow-headed depression ; all these markings, from the mode of their construction, are deeper at the central portion of the lines than at the extremities, which fine off.

Some of the crosses had a fresh look, as if but recently scraped ; but the majority of them were either partially or totally concealed by a thick coating of lichen, the growth of many centuries, and they had to be carefully cleaned before their forms could be determined.

In addition to these scrapings there are some small rectangular, as well as arrow-headed notches produced by chiselling, and quite sharp in their outlines and depressed angles. The only local information I could gain regarding these singular sculpturings was the belief that they were the work of the fairies, or "good people," on "state nights," such as St. John's Eve ; and when I asked if the children of the place frequented this stone as a playground, and scored these crosses for their amusement, my suggestion was gravely refuted, though it was admitted that the sloping surface of the rock was occasionally used as a stone slide (a "Montaigne Russe"), by the young people, the marks of which I could distinctly trace. The farmer on whose ground this rock crops up assured me that he had frequently bared the entire of its surface, and that the group of lines given in the lithograph are all that are on it.

Amongst the accurate remarks of my friend Mr. Graves, on this subject, he says that the simple cross is not essentially an emblem of Christianity, and its occurrence as ornamentation is no clue to the date of the work ; and the truth of this is exemplified by some of the carved bones from the caverns of Chaffaud.

The *crux ansata*, or handled cross, is an Egyptian emblem ; the simple straight-armed cross is found on Roman glass bottles in the English barrows ; and the Baron de Bonstetten in his "Essai sur les Dolmens" previously alluded to, states that crosses occur on the stones forming the rude sepulchral cists at Turiniac, in the Morbihan ; one of the supporting stones of this dolmen being decorated with three oval palettes, attached to each other by crosses, or lines crossing.<sup>1</sup> This crossing of straight lines appears to have been the very earliest effort at decoration practised by the hunters of

<sup>1</sup> See my note to the account of the Clonfinlagh Stone, *supra*.

With reference to the peculiar footmarks on the Clonfinlagh Stone, it is perhaps worthy of note, that in the "Comité Historique des Arts et Monuments," by Mons. Didron, he mentions that at Rheims Cathedral there occurs in one of the portals, upon one of the stones forming one of the arcades above

it, a monogrammatic device, and the outline of the sole of a shoe. The stone above it has the same character, and two soles of shoes ; the third, the same character, and three soles of shoes, and so on. The shoe mark he also found at Strasburgh, and nowhere else ; from this he argues that the masons who constructed the one building took part in that of the other.



CELL N SIDE OF CHAMBER, LARGE CAIRN ON WESTERN SUMMIT. SLE  
STONE DISH, 5 FT 5 IN BY 3 FT 2 IN



Forster & C°. Imp't. Dublin.

CAIRN ON WESTERN SUMMIT. SLEIVE-NA-CAILLIGHE, C<sup>O</sup> MEATH.  
STONE DISH, 5<sup>ft</sup> 5<sup>in</sup> BY 3<sup>ft</sup> 2<sup>in</sup>

the Mammoth and other extinct animals in Europe, as it is a form most easily produced from its simplicity ; and we find it very generally used in the decorations of our Pagan megalithic chambers.

That form of this emblem known to French archæologists as the cross "cramponé," which has the ends of the arms deflected from each other at right angles, or sometimes at an acute angle, is seen on Roman remains ; as, for example, on the Roman altar found at Risingham.<sup>1</sup> It is very remarkable that this peculiar form of cross extends in an unbroken line, as it were, from Pagan to late Mediæval times. I have detected it on Ogham monoliths in the county of Kerry ; and Mr. Hodder Westropp has correctly informed me that it is present on one of the Ogham stones in the gallery of the Royal Irish Academy's Museum. It is a frequent emblem on the coins of some of our Saxon Kings, especially those of EANBALD II., who was Archbishop of York, and who succeeded EANBALD I. in 796.<sup>2</sup>

It is also a mason mark, though I believe not a Masonic emblem ; and is found as such on the exterior of the Cathedral of Cologne ; it occurs also, as a similar mark, at Furness Abbey, in Roslin choir,<sup>3</sup> a building of the transition period ; and I dare say on many of our Mediæval cathedrals and churches in England.

The lithograph sketch of the North cist of the sepulchral chamber in the large cairn on the Western summit of Sleive-na-Caillighe, is here given in illustration of those brief remarks of mine on the discoveries of my friend Mr. Conwell, at that locality, published in the last number of this Journal. The lithograph will tell its own story better than any written description.

I may remark, however, that it is exceedingly interesting to find here the simple scraped cross inclosed in a rectangular figure, precisely similar to some of the most characteristic markings on the Ballydorragh Stone ; and here, also, directly associated with the earliest known devices, or decorations, or, for all that we can assert to the contrary, picture and symbolical writing.

I should mention that Mr. Conwell accompanied me on my second visit to the Ryefield Stone, and I am indebted to him for material aid in clearing its surface, and thus bringing to view many of the marks covered by the lichens.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide "Archæologia Britannica," vol. xxx., p. 6.* <sup>2</sup> *Vide "Archæologia Britannica," vol. xxxiv., p. 306.*

<sup>3</sup> *Idem, vol. xxxiv., p. 33.*